

NEW YORK THEATRICALS

BY FRANKLIN FYLES.

New York, Feb. 3.—The actor too old to be an ardent lover, yet still lagging on the stage in affairs of the heart, takes recourse to a young girl to do the wooing while he is unaware that she dotes on him, or even that he yearns for her. We have had that sort of sentimental thing over and over with men of the star grade. It is by chance, though, that I can tell you of a variant before it has been mentioned in print. The oddity of it is that the girl is the starred player; and she fails to open the old chump's eyes to her desire to be his wife. It is such a little bit of a piece that Billie Burke was afraid the newspaper critics, if they took a whack at it, would smash it like sledgehammers on a butterfly. So she slipped it in before a play too short to fill an evening and made no announcement, and makes of herself the first heroine to reach out for an old bachelor and fetch him to herself.

"The Philosopher In an Orchard" is scissored and pasted from a story by Anthony Hope. It is as provocative of wedlock as a naive actress in a white frock and orange trees in blossom can make it. The philosopher sits under a tree, talks learnedly of scientific things, while the girl reclines on the grass, handles flowers and tries to wake him to his love of her. She tells him that a young fellow has asked her to marry, that she likes but doesn't love him, that her heart has gone to a man of intellect whom she describes in a way that should make the philosopher recognize himself; yet the wise guy is a fool, doesn't perceive that she is throwing herself at him, and lets her go to the other chap. It hardly seems like Billie Burke not to say right out: "You old doll, I love you."

We have dramatic matter more fantastic than that in "The Piper" and "Chantecler." The piper is the pied one of Hamelin, who in the German legend lured the rats from a village with magic music, but was refused pay for it, and for vengeance led the children away never to return. Browning poetized the tale like that, you remember, and a long ago spectacular extravaganza didn't dare to fool with the story; but a Harvard professor's wife, Josephine Preston Peabody, wrote her own version in a play and tradition be hanged. She didn't mudrake in the legend for graft in the council of Hamelin, nor dig for a worse motive in the rat contractor than retaliation. Instead she characterized the musical musician as a good-hearted fellow, who lured the children from Hamelin because he loved them, and they were so fond of him that they didn't wish to go home. Mrs. Peabody won the Shakespeare centennial prize with "The Piper," and it was acted in last summer's festival at Stratford. London hasn't

had it. New York gets it at the New Theatre very pictorially.

The mayor of New York is amiable in licensing children on the stage, and more than a hundred scamper after the pied piper out of Hamelin and into the hollow hill, where he cares for and amuses them endearingly. He is the leader of a strolling troupe whose stunts delight the youngsters. The mothers bother him, however, with their yearning love of the lost ones. One woman finds him and make a piteous plea for her boys. His heart breaks to give up his willing captives, but he does it, and the ordeal of the parting is almost tearful to the audience. Finally the musician pipes his little guests back to their homes and departs lonesomely with his fellow strollers. "The Piper" is a noteworthy show on the revolving triplicate stage of the theatre founded by millionaires.

THE MICROBE'S SERENADE

At the recent New Theatre banquet in New York, George Ade recited a jingle which he called "The Microbe's Serenade." It runs as follows:

A lovelorn microbe met by chance
At a swagger bacterioid dance
A proud bacillian belle, and she
Was first of the animalculae,
Of organism saccharine,
She was the protoplasmic queen.
The microscopical pride and pet
Of the biological smartest set,
And so this infinitesimal swain
Evolved a pleading low refrain:

"O lovely metamorphic germ,
What futile scientific term
Can well describe your many charms?
Come to these embryonic arms
Then hie away to my cellular home
And be my little diatom!"

His epithelium burned with love,
He swore by molecules above
She'd be his own gregarious mate,
Or else he would disintegrate.
This amorous mite of a parasite
Pursued the germ both day and night
And 'neath her window often played
This Darwin-Huxley serenade—
He'd warble to her every day
This rhizopodical roundelay:

"O most primordial type of spore,
I never met your like before,
And though a microbe has no heart,
From you, sweet germ, I'll never part.
We'll sit beneath some fungus growth
Till dissolution claims us both!"

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